

# PHUKET



## Useful Telephone Numbers in Phuket

Phone Directory Assistance : 13

Overseas Phone Service : 100

International Airport : (076) 327230-7

Immigration : (076) 212108

Tourist Police : (076) 219878, 1699 (Emergency Call)

Fire Brigade : (076) 211111

Wachira Hospital : (076) 211114

Phuket Adventist Hospital : (076) 212386

Phuket International Hospital : (076) 249400-20

Phuket Ruampat Hospital : (076) 212950

Pat Sompot Hospital : (076) 214428

Bangkok Hospital : (076) 254421-30

Thai Airways : (076) 211195, 212499, 212946, 216755

Bangkok Airways : (076) 212341

China Airlines : (076) 216462

Dragon Air : (076) 215734

Malaysia Airlines : (076) 213749

Silk Air : (076) 213895

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# Phuket

Phuket is the modern name for the island, and a variation on the older spelling ( a Thai 'T' has been substituted for a Thai 'J' in the Thai language spelling of the word ) which evidence shows was itself an exact translation of the word 'manikram', used by Tamil visitors from India as long ago as 1025 A.D.(B.E. 1568). It means 'Crystal ( or jewel - like ) City.' Because Phuket was a well-known stop among sailors in ancient remains, maps, and texts, the oldest of which is Ptolemy 's dating from the early 3rd century A.D., where it states that in travelling from Suwanapoom, ( the 'Golden Land' : identified as the Southeast Asian Peninsula ) down to the Malay Peninsula, one passes 'Cape Junk Ceylon', which is a name often seen on old maps applied to Phuket.

There are also references in Thai history to Phuket being a part of the Shivite Kingdom of the Malay Archipelago. Later, from the period of the Sri Vichai Empire to that of Siritam Nakorn, Phuket was known as "The Town of Takua-Thalang" being number 11 in a group of 12 towns that took as their badge the sign of the dog. Phuket was associated with Takua Pa until the age of Sukothai. During the Ayuttaya period, the Dutch arrived and built storehouses to use in the tin trade. Thus the northern and central parts of the island were governed by Thais, and southern and western portions were where foreigners came to buy tin ore.

During the beginning of the Rattanakosin, that is the present period ( c. 1780 ), the Burmese King brought his armies to attack various cities in Thailand, and came constantly to attack Thalang in the south. At that time the governor had recently passed away. Khunying Jan, the governor's wife and Khun Mook, her younger sister, collected forces to fight with the Burmese army, and finally defeated them on March 13, 1785 ( B.E. 2328 ). The King Rama I graciously bestowed upon Khunying Jan the honorific title, Thao Thep Krasattri, and upon, Khun Mook, Thao Sri Sunthorn. Afterward Phuket grew and prospered through the mining and sale of tin.

In the reign of Rama V, west coast towns were gathered together into a single department, called a 'Monthon' in Thai, and this Monthon Phuket subsisted until Phuket was accorded formal status as a separated province in 1936.

## Location

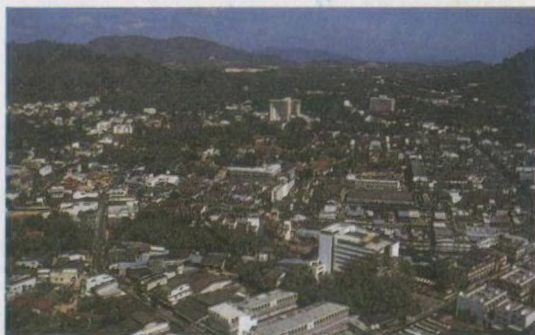
Phuket is one Thailand's southern provinces, lying on the west coast in the Andaman Sea, which is a part of the Indian Ocean, from 7 degrees 45 minutes latitude to 8 degrees 15 minutes north latitude and 98 degrees 15 minutes to 98 degrees 40 minutes east longitude. The total area of Phuket, which is Thailand's largest island, and the islands surrounding it that together form Phuket Province, is 570 sq. kms. At its greatest breadth the island proper is 21.3 kms., and its greatest length is 48.7 kms. the province is bordered thus:

On the north: is Pakh Prah Channel; Phang - nga Province is connected to Phuket by two bridges in the same area, Sarasin Bridge and Thao Thep Krasatri Bridge.

On the south: lies the Andaman Sea.

On the east: is the Bay of Phang - nga.

On the west: lies the Andaman Sea.



## Geography

Phuket is broken by mountains and valleys throughout mainly from a north - south range running down the west coast. This accounts for about 70 percent of the land area. The tallest peak, Mai Tao Sip Song ( 12 Cane Peak ) is roughly 529 meters, in Tambon Patong, Kathu District. The other 30 percent of the land mass is flat land located mainly in the central

and eastern portions of the island. Sandy beaches and mountains lie on the west; in addition there are small estuaries and lagoons, including Klong Bang Yai, Klong Ta Jeen, Klong Ta Rua, and Klong Bang Rong.

## **Weather**

Phuket's weather is typical of its location near in an area influenced by monsoon winds: warm, humid, but pleasant all year long. There are only two seasons: the rainy season, from May to November, during the southwest monsoon, and the hot season, from December to April, when the monsoon winds blow from the northeast. March has the highest average temperature, 33.4° c, and the lowest average temperatures are experienced early mornings in January, when the thermometer falls to 22° c.

## **Economy**

1. Investment in the tourism business has seen the most expansion and is the area with the greatest income. Tourist related businesses include: hotels, restaurants, tour agencies, and souvenir shops.

2. Agriculture is also important, including chiefly: rubber planting, coconut, and pineapple. There is considerable activity as well as fishing and raising fish and shellfish in farms.

3. Important industries include: processing of agricultural products, and refining tin.

## **Population**

The total population in January 1995 was 199,847. Most are Thai Buddhists of ethnic Chinese blood. In addition there are Thai Muslims, Sihks, Christians, and a small group called 'Thai Mai' (new Thais) but better known as 'Chaolay' or 'Sea Gypsies.'

## **Government**

Phuket government is divided into 3 districts (called 'Amphur'): Amphur Muang (Phuket Town), Thalang, and Kathu.

## **Travel**

**By car or coach:** From Bangkok use route 4 passing Nakorn Pathom, Prachuabkirikan,

Chumphon Provinces, Kraburi and Kaper districts in Ranong Province, and Kuraburi, Takua Pa and Takua Tung districts in Phang-nga Province. There you will reach Ban Kok Kloy, the last big town on the road to Phuket, which, though an island, is reached by crossing the Thao Thep Krasattri Bridge. The total distance is about 867 kms.

Bus transport includes both air and non - air conditioned coaches leaving from Bangkok's Southern Bus Terminal daily. Phone numbers to contact for further information:

- The Transport Company Ltd. Tel. (02) 4351200 or, in Phuket Tel. (076) 211480,

- Phuket Central Tours Tel. (02) 4343233 or, in Phuket Tel. (076) 213615 and 214335,

- Phuket Travel Service Tel. (02) 4355018, 4355034 or, in Phuket Tel. (076) 222107 - 9.

**By Air :** Phuket Airport now is an international airport, so Phuket can be reached directly from points all over the world. For further information contact Thai Airways International or travel agents. Thai Airways numbers in Bangkok are Tel. (02) 2800070 2800080, and in Phuket, the numbers are Tel. (076) 211195, 212499, 212946.

**By Sea :** Port of Phuket at Ao Makham has facilities for cargo transfers, and is also a frequent stop of cruise ships both from Thailand and from abroad. Contact Tel (076) 391155 for information about cruises touching at Port of Phuket.

### **Local Transportation**

**From the Airport :** there is limousine service for town, Patong Beach, Kata - Karon Beach. Departure times depend on the arrival times of airplanes. For your convenience, there is also taxi service to all destinations.

**To the Airport :** Limousines depart from Holiday Charter Tel. (076) 246088 at Phunphol Night Plaza. Departure times depend on the departure time of flights. However most first - class hotels also have such a service for their guests.

**In Town :** No public buses, but there are Tuk Tuk which operate a communal service. Just tell your destination to the driver.

**To Beaches :** There are local buses (Songthaew) between the town and all tourist beaches. Buses leave for the beaches at the market on Ranong Road at half-hour intervals until 6:00 p.m. After that, you must hire a Tuk Tuk.

**Private cars ,jeeps and motorbikes :** can be hired from a car-rent company for your convenience. Those who hires must hold a Thai or an international car or motorbike license.

### **Places of Interest in Amphur Muang ( Phuket Town and Environs ):**

**Khao Rung Hill :** lies on the northwest part of the town. The view from the top is splendid, and the hill itself features a park, an exercise course and some eating spots.

**Saphan Hin :** Another place for rest and relaxation in the city where Phuket Road meets the sea. It is also the site of the monument to the Australian Captain Edward Thomas Miles who brought the first tin dredge to Phuket in 1909. The monument, built in 1969, commemorates 60 years of tin dredging in Phuket and shows the importance of tin mining, even comparatively recently, played in the island's fortunes. A prolonged recession in the price of tin has, however, resulted in the virtual extinguishing of the industry on the island, and except for the continued operation of a single refinery, all other tin mining activity in Phuket has ceased.



Saphan Hin is also the location of a sport center, large playing fields, many fine restaurant, and the island's boxing stadium. It serves in addition as the site of two colleges, Phuket Community College and Phuket Vocational College.

**Antique Buildings :** Most of the buildings in Phuket's city center were constructed nearly a hundred years ago, during the period of the first great tin boom. These buildings show mixed Chinese and western influences in their architecture, called 'Sino-Portuguese'. It is a style common to all the coastal tin - mining settlements on the Malay Peninsula. The buildings are characteristically much longer than they are wide, and the entry ways have fancy latticeworks. Many lovely examples are to be found on Dibuk Rd., and also on Phang-nga, Thalang, Yaowarat, and Krabi Roads. Phuket's Town Hall, Provincial Court, and the Nakorn Luang Thai Bank are specimens of this architecture, too.



**Phuket Aquarium :** More than 100 different kinds of fishes and other marine life are on display. The Aquarium is located at Cape Panwa on the extreme southeast of the island. Open daily from 8.30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Entry fees are: for children 5 baht, adults 20 baht. Contact the Aquarium at (076) 391126 for additional information.

**Phuket Butterfly Garden and Aquarium :** lies about 3 kms. from Phuket Town's city center. Follow Yaowarat Rd., past Wachira Hospital to its end in Sam Kong Village, and turn left at the three-way intersection; thereafter, look for signs indicating the road to the Butterfly

Garden. A great variety of tropical insect species, chiefly butterflies, have been collected and preserved for study. All aspects of the butterfly's habitat are open to inspection; the tour is both unique and enlightening. Equally unusual and interesting is the aquarium section. Open daily from 9:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. Prices: children 50 baht, adults 100 baht. For more information call (076) 215616, 210861

**Phuket Thai Village and Orchid Garden**: lies about 3 kms. from the town center off Thap Krasattri Rd., There is a sign indicating the entrance, where a left turn is made to enter. Performances are given of Thai dramatic arts (dance), the art of Thai handicraft, and trained elephants. There is also a demonstration of tin mining as it was done long time ago, and an orchid garden. Two performances are given: the morning session begins at 11:00 A.M. and the evening session at 5:30 P.M. Prices are 220 baht per person. Further details are available by calling (076) 214860

**Koh Sirey**: is on the southeast side of Phuket, with a total area of 20 sq. kms. A channel, Klong Tah Jeen, separating the two islands Phuket and Koh Sirey is conveniently bridged. There is a large Buddha standing on top of the hill at Koh Sirey Temple. Also, the largest village of Chaolay, or Sea Gypsies, is found here, at Laem Tuk Gae. The beaches at Koh Sirey are muddy and not suitable for swimming. Most of Koh Sirey's population is engaged in fishing.

**Wat Chalong**: is about 8 kms. outside town. Take Vichit Songkram Rd. to the Bypass Rd. and turn left, and drive for about 10 mins. Wat Chalong will be on your left. This is where stands the cast statue of Luang Por Cham, who helped



the people of Phuket put down the Ahngyee, or Chinese Coolie, Rebellion in 1876 during the reign of Rama V. There are also statues of Luang Por Chuang, and Luang Por Gluam, other monks, who were abbots of the temple during later times, and who are the objects of respect and recipients of offerings by Phuket people generally.

**Ao Chalong** : lies 11 kms. southwest of town. Take Chao Fa Rd. to the traffic circle at Chalong (the Ha Yak) and turn left and the seaside is less than 1 km. The bay is very large, and the beach curves gently extending for many kms. but it is not suitable for swimming because the sand is muddy. There are a number of well-known seafood restaurants, a pier from which to depart on island excursions, and a small craft harbor.

**Laem Ka** : is 16 kms. from town. Take Viset Rd. from Chalong circle and follow the signs toward Rawai Beach. Before reaching Rawai Beach there will be a sign indicating Laem Ka a small road on the left. Follow that road less than 1 km. to the beach. Laem Ka is quiet, clean, and picturesquely dotted with sea rocks. It is suitable for swimming. Boats can be chartered to visit neighboring islands like Koh Hay and Koh Bon.

**Rawai Beach** : lies 17 kms. from town. Follow Viset Rd. from Chalong circle to its end at Rawai. There is a Sea Gypsy village on the left-hand side; on the right-hand, down the road to Promthep Cape are fishing and chartered boats, seafood restaurants, hotels, bungalows, and bars. Swimming is safe because the water is shallow, the waves small, and the wind does not blow strongly. Rawai is a popular recreational spot for both locals and tourists and is a typical destination for a Sunday outing.

**Promthep Cape** : 'Prom' is Thai for the Hindu 'Brahma' signifying purity, and 'Thep' means 'God'. Promthep is a headland stretching in to the sea and forming the extreme south-end of Phuket. It has been a prominent feature for mariners since of early seafarers from the sub-continent, remains of whose journey's have been found all along the Malay-peninsula's west coast.



From Rawai Beach turn right and go for 2 kms. The cape has tall cliffs on the south, and was formerly called by local villagers 'Laem Jao' (The Gods' Cape). From the cliffs running down to the boulders at the sea is a line of toddy palm trees. Emerald green currents swirl in the deep water and breakers hurl themselves in vain against the rocky point: it is one of Phuket's most inspiring vistas. In the distance can be seen Koh Gaew. From Promthep Cape, which is the most beautiful place to catch Phuket's famous sunsets, a road leads northwest to Nai Harn Beach.

**Nai Harn Beach** : Follow the road northwest from Promthep which winds along the coast to Nai Harn, which lies about 18 kms. from Phuket Town. The white sandy beach is clean and rather quiet, nestled in a small bay with striking views. During the monsoon season, from May to October, the sea is quite turbulent and swimming should not be attempted at Nai Harn.



**Ao Sehn** : A small bay lying northwest of Nai Harn. To get there, you must pass through the gates of the Phuket Yacht Club Hotel, at Nai

Harn and continue through the hotel to the northwest to Ao Sehn. The beach is small, clean, quite, dotted with rocks large and small, and very romantic; a great picnic spot.

**View Point :** Take the coast road from Nai Harn toward Kata Beach and along the way you will come to a place clearly demarcated as View Point, with a large public pavilion where you can rest and enjoy the view. From here can be seen at once 3 of Phuket's prettiest bays, Kata Noi, Kata Beach, and Karon Beach.



**Kata Beach :** Take Chao Fa Rd. south from Phuket Town and turn right at Chalong circle onto Patak Rd. following the signs to Kata. The total distance is 17 kms. There are two beaches called Kata : Kata Noi and Kata Yai ('Noi' means small, 'Yai' means big). Both are excellent for swimming and snorkeling, there is a coral reef running to Koh Poo, a small island nearby. Currently, Kata Beach has complete tourist facilities, including hotels and bungalow, tour agencies, shops and entertainment spots; great for tourist services.

**Karon Beach :** Just north of Kata lies Karon, along the same road. The beach is very long, the sand sparkling white, the water clear and clean. As at Kata, the full range of tourist facilities is available in abundance, including shops, hotels, tour agencies, etc.

**Koh Kaew :** lies at the south end of Promthep, about 3 kms. from Rawai. A boat can be taken from Rawai about 15 minutes to Koh Kaew. There are coral reefs, sandy beaches, and beautiful nature. A Buddha's

Footprints has been established at Koh Kaew also.

**Koh Lone** : is a large island in Chalong Bay. Take a passenger boat from Chalong for 20 minutes to Koh Lone. There are a fishing village on the island, a place to stay, and tourist services.

**Koh Hay (Coral Island)** : Southwest of Cape Panwa, is an island sanctuary administered by the Department of Fisheries. You can take a boat from either Chalong or Rawai, or contact a tour agent for a package tour. There are two beaches at the island on the north and east, which are pristine. Beautiful coral gardens spread out a hundred meters from the beach, and in English the island is often called simply 'Coral Island'. Swimming, water-sports and accommodation are all available.



**Koh Racha** : Comprising a pair of islands south of Phuket in a line running from southwest, to northeast. They are :

- **Koh Racha Yai** : has a horseshoe-shaped beach at the foot of a valley on the west



called 'Nam Tok' bay. The fine white sandy beach and clear waters are reminiscent of the Similan Island in their untouched beauty. There is a view point on the south at the top of the hill from which to take in the whole island. On the east, Kon Kae Bay is perfect for looking at the coral gardens.

**- Koh Racha Noi :** lies 10 kms from Koh Racha Yai, and is a result of the action of coral formation over eons. It is much more rocky than sandy. On the west is a small bay where boats can be anchored. The emerald green waters are not suitable for swimming but the fishing is very interesting.

**Travel :** When the monsoon is not prevailing, boats can be chartered from Chalong Bay; travel time about 2 hours. Some tour companies have speed boats that will take you there in just 1 hour. Overnight stays are available on Koh Racha Yai.

#### **Places of interest in Kathu District:**

**Patong Beach :** Phuket most famous beach and center of the island's night-life. Patong lies 15 kms. from Phuket Town. Take Vichit Songkram Rd. or route 4020 about 9 kms. and turn left. Go on another 6 kms to Patong Beach. The Bay is long, wide, and gently curving, suitable for every kind of water sport, which are all available. Across from the beach, a city in all but name has developed to meet the needs of tourism growth, featuring entertainments of virtually every description both by day and night; accommodations ranging from guest houses to hotels of great elegance; shopping emporiums to suit any need or taste; and tour companies to handle preparations for local explorations, either of nature or of night-life, and onward travel; international cuisine, Patong is the place to look.



**Kalim Beach :** Take the same route as that to Patong, but turn right and go northwest when you arrive at the sea. Kalim is a small, charming beach with rocky points and coral. Accommodations can be found along the beach. Kalim is a quiet alternative to bustling Patong, yet conveniently near to tourist services and night life.

**Kamala Beach :** lies 26 kms. from Phuket Town. Take Phuket Rd., which becomes Thap Krasattri Rd., north to the Two Heroines Monument and turn left onto Sri Sunthorn Rd. After arriving at Surin Beach, the road veers left and runs over the hills along the coast another 2 kms. to Kamala Bay, which is breathtakingly picturesque when viewed in perspective from the hill top. Quiet and peaceful, with a roaming herd of buffalo. Kamala is the perfect romantic hideaway. There is some low-rise development and tourist accommodations along the 2.5 kms. stretch of beach.

#### **Places of Interest in Thalang District :**

**Thalang National Museum :** After leaving Phuket Town turn right at the Two Heroines Monument and go on a short way to the museum, which is indicated by a sign on the right. All of Phuket Island was once called Thalang, and this is Phuket's museum featuring ancient remains and artifacts discovered on the coast, materials used during the wars with Burma; and an exhibition of life in old Phuket among both the Chaolay and the Phuket people.

**Pearl Farms :** There are several pearl farms on Phuket, at Ao Yohn, Cape Panwa, and on the outlying islands of Koh Rang Noy, Koh Rang Yai, Koh Naka Noi, and Koh Naka Yai. The cultured pearls include both half-pearl sold in Thailand and round pearls for export. An interesting demonstration of the cultured pearl process is conducted on Koh Naka Yai and Koh Naka Noi. Boats can be rented at Ao Por Bay for the 20 minutes ride to the island, and tour companies also have package tours to the islands at reasonable prices. Ao Por is situated 26 kms. from Phuket Town. Turn right at the Two Heroines Monument and go on until you see the signs indicating Ao Por.

**Wat Pra Nang Sang** : lies 20 kms. from Phuket Town on Thap Krasattri Rd., in the town of Thalang. It is on the west side of the street at the main intersections. The temple is old and of historic interest because it is the camp and battle site of the fighting with Burma in 1785. Inside, in the chapel, which is quite old, there are 3 of the world's oldest and largest tin statues of Buddha called 'Pra Nai Poong' (Statues of Buddha in the Belly) or 'Pra Sahm Kasat' (3 of statues of Buddha) which are at a different level in the abdomen of the larger ones. All of these are antique.

**Wat Pra Tong** : is 21 kms. from Phuket Town, on Thap Krasattri Rd. Pass the main intersection of Thalang Town (the town's only stoplight) and near the District Offices on the right will be a sign and the temple entrance. This is where stands the solid gold statue of Buddha that popped up from the ground. According to the annals, this area in the past was a field used for raising animals. A child leading a buffalo tied it up at a post that had appeared out of the ground, but nobody know whether that post was merely the top or the whole statue. However the child afterward fell ill and eventually died. The child's father dreamt that his offspring's death resulted from having tied up the buffalo to the headcovering of the Buddha. This persuaded the villagers to dig around, and they discovered the story's truth, but were unable to dig the statue up. Later, King Padung of Burma brought his troops to attack Thalang, as Phuket was then called, in 1785. His soldiers attempted to dig up the statue but did not succeed, neither in that nor



in bringing it back to Burma, because a swarm of hornets stung them and drove them away. Subsequently, the villagers made another half-statue and set it over the first covering it, as it appears today.

**Kao Pra Taew Wildlife Park and Forest Reserve** : was declared a wild animal preserve on July 8, 1980. Covering 13,925 rai (22.28 square kilometers), it is virgin forest, with many different species of trees, especially palms, many very difficult to find, and one, the 'Governor of Thalang Palm' (Palm Jao Muang Thalang) or 'White Backed Palm' (Palm Lahng Kao) which grows nowhere else on earth. Many kinds of wild animal are also to be found, including langurs, monkeys, barking deer, deer, bears, wild boar, squirrels, mouse deer, and various species of birds. Kao Pra Taew is also the source of important streams for Phuket. It is thus a place of interest and of study for those concerned with nature and the condition of the environment. The main attractions in the area are :

- **Ton Sai Waterfall** : 22 kms. from Phuket Town. Take Thap Krasatri Rd. to the stoplight in Thalang, turn right and go 3 kms. The waterfall there is small, but the water flows during the rainy season. The surrounding large and small trees offer a shady place to rest.



- **Bang Pae Waterfall** : Go east from the Two Heroines Monument 7 kms. to Tambon Pa Klok. The waterfall is small and there are shady trees all around. Bang Pae is headquarters for the Gibbon Project, which nurses back to health and prepares for release into the forest.

**Surin Beach** : is 24 kms. from the town of Phuket. Take Thap Krasattri Rd. to the Two Heroines Monument and turn left on to Sri Sunthorn Rd. Go on another 12 kms. to the beach, indicated by a sign, which lies at the foot of some hills. There are casuarina trees at the north end in a line along the beach, and a small old golf course first made during the reign of Rama VII. The beach is quiet and peaceful, but drops-off steeply. The waves and currents there are dangerous and swimming is not advised.

**Laem Sing** : is just 1 kms. from Surin Beach to the south. Turn left at Surin Beach and go down the cape. There is a sign indicating Lam Sing. The beach is small, quiet, sandy, and very charming, with rocky headlands jutting into the sea. No accommodations.



**Bangtao Bay** : lies 24 kms. from Phuket Town. Take Thap Krasattri Rd. north to the Two Heroines Monument and turn left on Sri Sunthorn Rd. Go on another 12 kms. to Surin Beach and turn right. Go 2 kms. and you will see Bangtao Bay on you left. Home to the sprawling Laguna Phuket development, Bangtao, formerly a tin mine, is a long sandy beach lined with trees. Swimming is excellent. Watersports, food, and accommodations are all available.

**Sirinath National Park (Nai Yang Beach)**: is declared a national park on July 13, 1981. The park lies 30 kms. from Phuket Town off Thap Krasattri Rd. After passing kilometer stone 21, there will be a road running west with signs indicating Nai Yang. This is just north of Thalung Town. Take that road 10 kms. to the beach.

Access to the park is possible also by taking the airport road west another 2 kms. The park covers a total area of 56,250 rais (90 sq. kms) and stretches along the beach for 13 kms. beginning at:

- **Nai Thon Beach** : Take the same route as above but turn westward to the mountains at the sign indicating Ban Saku and Nai Thorn Beach. Go on 3 kms. to the beach. There you will find a peaceful, quiet cove, beautiful along its length, and well sheltered from wind and waves. Fine for swimming.

- **Nai Yang Beach** : is where the park offices are located. A line of fir trees runs its length providing shade and a perfect place to picnic. Swimming is fine there. A large coral reef harbors considerable and various sea life; notably sea-turtles make the bay their base, coming up to lay eggs during the period from November to February. Sea-turtle numbers have decreased, however, to the point where few now make their yearly appearance. This has led to efforts locally to increase the population, with education programs for villagers and the release into the wild of turtles spawned in captivity.

- **Mai Khao Beach** : Take Thap Krasattri Rd. Pass the airport to the extreme northwest of Phuket. Just before the Sarasin Bridge which connects Phuket with Phang-nga, is a sign indicating the road to Mai Kao. From the northbound lanes it is a left turn; go on 3.5 kms. to the beach. Sea cicadas and turtles are found there, as at Nai Yang.

- **Sai Kaew Beach** : Runs from Mai Kao to the Sarasin Bridge. The beach is white and rimmed with firs its whole length; Phuket's most northern beach.

### **Festival and Local Customs of Phuket :**

**Thao Thap Krasattri - Thao Sri Sunthorn Festival** : falls on the 13 th of March. Various activities remind the inhabitants of the events that enabled Phuket to survive the battles with Burma, and of the heroic deeds done then.

**Turtle Releasing Festival** : falls on the 13th of April, which is Songkran, or Thai New Year. Department of Fisheries has also declared

National Fisheries Day. Turtles are released into the sea from various beaches around Phuket.

**Customary Setting Adrift of the Chaolay Boats :** Ceremonies occur in the middle of the 6th and the 11th months each year. The Chaolay, or Sea Gypsies, at Rawai and at Sapam set their boats adrift on the evening of the 13th; those at Sirey on the 14th; and those at Laem Lah (at the north end of Phuket) celebrate on the 15th. it is an exorcism of the sort also practiced a little differently throughout Thailand during Loy Kratong Festival. Boats are built of wood, fingernail and hair clipping, together with little doll effigies, are put in the boats and set adrift, the purpose being to drive sorrow and suffering from their midst. Afterward, a dance is performed round the Chaolay Boats, the famous 'Rahm Rong Ngeng'.

**Por Tor Festival :** An ethic Chinese festival occurring during the 7th lunar month of the Chinese calendar usually in September. Offerings are made to ancestors and holy spirits, of flour cakes shaped like turtles, boat large and small, and colored red for good luck. The Chinese believe turtles have long lives, and thus to make offering of turtles will help extending their own lives. it is an important-merit making ceremony.

**Phuket Vegetarian Festival :** During the first 9 days of the 9th lunar month of the Chinese calendar, in September or October or November, Phuket Chinese eat no meat, eggs, milk, fish, garlic, nor spices. The festival was first held in 1825 and has been performed yearly since then, the object being to purify the mind and body, and to demonstrate the strength of their faith. Amazing feats are performed by participants who, possessed by spirits and in a trance, walk on burning coals, pierce tender parts of their bodies with sharp or thorny instruments, climb a ladder made of knives barefoot, and generally do such as might well leave an ordinary person dead or in critical condition; and this without any apparent suffering or ill-effect, nor much loss of blood either. it is an astonishing spectacle, performed not by actors but by the common citizenry, one which makes believers of all who see it.



**Patong Carnival (The Opening of the Tourist Season)** : starts the first day of November. The first festival was in 1985. It is to welcome tourists and create a spirit of teamwork among those in the tourist business, the government, and among the people generally. There are various activities, including : a morning offering to monks, watersports competitions, and an international beauty contest with participants being tourist.

**The King's Cup Regatta** : A boat race in honor of His Majesty the King of Thailand, first held in 1987, to celebrate the 5th 12-year cycle of his birth, and beginning each year since then, on his birthday, the 5th of December. Racing yachts come from all over the world to compete. The competition features various classes of yacht such as keelboats, catamarans, multihulls for one week, and the event takes place between Nai Harn Beach and Phi Phi Island.



### **Local Delicacies :**

Phuket has a number of characteristic foods different both in the ingredients and in the cooking. Here is a short guide to help you find and taste some of the unique flavors of Phuket.

**Mee Hokkien (Hokkien Noodles) :** Fried yellow-noodles. The most famous old shops for this are Mee Ton Poe, at the circle of clock Tower, Mee Ao Gay on Phunphon Rd. , and Mee Sapam, on Thap Krasattri Rd.

**Mee Hoon Pah Chang :** Fried noodles eaten with a soup of boiled pork ribs. The oldest shop for this is in Soon Uthit Lane on Yaowarat Rd.

**Mee Sua :** Phuket breakfast boiled noodles. Famous shops for this is Rahn Koo Kwan, near Phuket Ruampat Hospital on Phuket Rd.

**Kanom Cheen Phuket :** Spaghetti-like dish served for breakfast in Phuket. Spicy curries are poured over the noodles and eaten with various vegetables like a salad, along with boiled egg, pastry, and Hor Mok, a delicious curried fish casserole. The best known shops include, Rahn Kwan Kanom Cheen, on Tung Ka Rd.; Kanom Cheen Pah Mai, on Satun Rd.

**Loh Bah :** Fried pork sausages, eaten with fried beancurd and a spicy sauce. the name shops are in the vicinity of Sapan Hin in Phuket Town.

**Oh Tao :** Fried mussels in flour,taro, and eggs. Ask for it.

**Nam Choop Phuket :** This is a Nam Prik dish, spicy, made of curried shrimp paste, fresh shrimp, onions, pepper, and lime. Eaten with rice or Kanom Cheen and fresh vegetables.

**Nam Prik Goong Siab :** A dry curry with dry shrimp eaten with fresh vegetables. Many restaurants serve it as a specialty, including: Mae Porn on Phang-nga Rd.; Laem Thong Restaurant, on Chana Charoen Rd.; and Gan Eng Seafood at Ao Chalong.

**Tao Saw :** or Kanom Bia Phuket, tiny cakes with various fillings in a thin crust. Famous for it are: Keng Tin, beside Ruam Phet Hospital on Phuket Rd.; and Kanom Bia Ta Kua Pa, in Soon Uthit Lane on Yaowarat Rd.

**Oh Aew :** A jelly, specially made of bananas mixed with seaweed extract, served with ice and syrup. The shop in Soon Uthit Lane is best know, on Yaowarat Rd.

**Cashew Nuts :** Cashews are a popular tree to plant in Phuket. it is therefore a purchase among visitors to take home for friends and relatives. They come dry roasted, fried, coated, etc. Best known for their cashewnuts are Sri Boorapa Orchid, on Takuatoong Rd. , and Methee on Tilok Utit Rd.

**Phuket Pineapple :** Sweet and crisp, famous in Thailand. Its flavor is different than others. Buy it in the market.

**Souvenirs :** Best known are shell products, pewter, lacquerware, silk, and rattan. Look for shops selling them in town and at the beaches

### **Sport and Activies :**

**Golfing Destination :** Phuket is a popular golf-holiday destination. World class courses by top designers include: Phuket Country Club and Phuket Century, in Kathu; Banyan Tree, at Bangtao beach; and Blue Canyon, in Thalang District near the ariport. Most have nearby accommodation, but transport can be arranged from anywhere in Phuket.

**Diving :** in Phuket's location and charcteristically clean water, not muddied by the action of currents, rivers, or streams, has given rise to a large and thriving scuba diving trade. Scuba diving can be learned in a matter of 1 or 2 days, and lessons and license are issued by fully accredited teachers.



**Yacht Service** : A full range of services is available to yachtsmen visiting Phuket, including safe, secure moorings at Ao Chalong, Phuket Boat Lagoon, and Laem Prao, dry dock, boat repair, equipment and crew. Yachts of every size and shape can be chartered, either as bareboats or with full crew. Be sure to check with Immigration Office for details about bringing or leaving a yacht.

**Fishing** : Phuket is fast emerging as a top game-fishing destination in Southeast Asia. Indeed, the list of fighting fish Species available in the Andaman Sea around Phuket includes Racha Island, Dokmai Island, Maithon Island, Phi Phi Islands, etc. is as long as one to be found in a game fisherman's hand book. They include Marlin, Sailfish, Tuna, Giant Trevally, Rainbow Runner and so on. Tours are available on a daily basis.

**Sea Canoeing** : is an adventure for exploring the mysteries of grottos and limestone islands which rise stunningly from the waterways of mangrove forest around Phang-nga Bay and Krabi. The expedition can be reserved through travel agents.



**Horse Riding** : Satisfy the needs of tourists who enjoy horse-back riding, three riding clubs include on Patak Rd. on the way to Kata Beach, Ban Sai Yuan on the way to Nai Harn Beach, and Laguna Phuket, Bang Tao Beach have been set up in Phuket. Instructors are available for beginners. And those accomplished riders can walk their horse to admire the natural beauty, or seek adventure by riding at a canter

through the forests, along the beaches or over the hills.

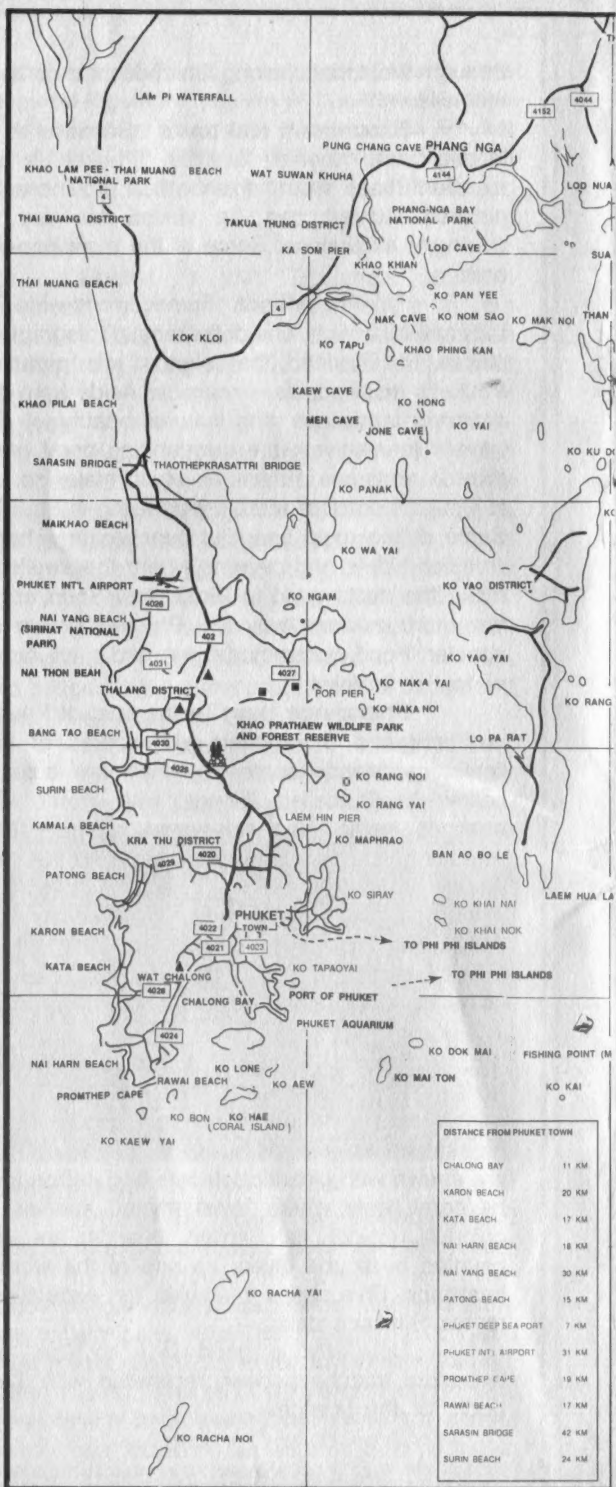
**Excursions and tours** : Because of its location and tourist facilities, Phuket is an excellent base from which other provinces or places of interest can be visited for day or overnight excursions. Some of the most popular are :

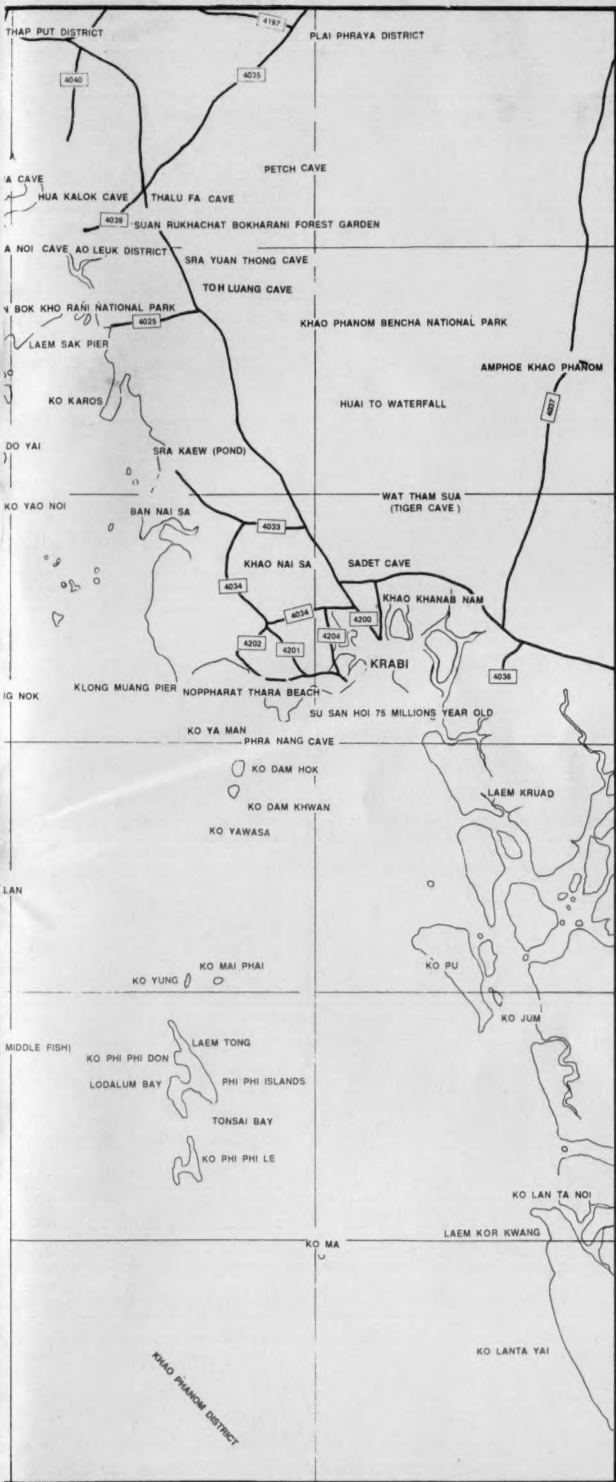
**Phi Phi Islands** : Famed world-wide for their natural beauty, one of the most photographed places in Thailand, the islands are probably Phuket's most popular excursion. Aside from the dramatic landscape and natural beauty of the islands themselves, the surrounding coral reefs provide undersea attractions which make no trip to Phuket complete without snorkeling in Phi Phi. Some of the most beautiful beaches anywhere, limestone cliffs, and caverns where the swallows make the nests used in Birds Nest Soup, are a few more reasons why Phi Phi has grown so popular. Food, accommodations, and a full range of tourist facilities.

**Phang-nga Bay** : To the east of Phuket is Phang-nga Bay, dotted with scores of tiny limestone islands, some of which are actually hollow shells, called 'Hong's', with water and beaches inside. The sea-scape is exotic. The limestone islands appear to spring from the sea, the sheer cliff walls typically rising straight up and forming a flat, foliage tufted plateau on top. Excursions around Phang-nga Bay, and guided tours through the Hong's by inflatable boat are offered by hotels and tour companies everywhere in Phuket.

**Similan Islands** : A group of islands northwest of Phuket in the Andaman Sea. These islands are a marine national park, and there are no inhabitants or infrastructure of any kind. They are strewn with gigantic boulders and surrounded by coral reefs, where dwell myriad species of colorful tropical fish. Similan Islands are accounted by scuba divers as one of the world's best trips. Dive shops in Phuket run expeditions to the Similans daily.

**Note** : It's a good idea to use tour operators that have been registered with TAT. Look for the licence.





- The Island Jewel of Thailand
- The World's Paradise Dream Island
- White Beaches and the Golden Sands
- The Two Heroines
- The Abbot of Chalong Temple

# PHUKET



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